

# What's Your Story? My Lifeline

Events

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Feelings/  
Control

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# SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS

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## Send home after Session 7

<<date>>

Dear Parents,

I have enjoyed having your child in small group over the past several weeks. I hope you have had an opportunity to talk with your child about what we have been discussing in small group. As I mentioned in the original permission letter, we made an Honor Box for your family member. Next week is our last session, which is where we will be gathering additional items to include in these boxes. Although we have several items from our small-group sessions to include, your child might want to bring additional items to include in the box. Talk to them about the following:

- Cookies
- Candy
- Drawings
- Tapes (audio tapes of messages to your deployed family member, a story, etc.)
- School papers, copies of tests, report cards, etc.
- Letters
- News clippings
- Photographs
- Crossword puzzles/brain teasers/jokes

I have talked to the students about these possibilities. Keep in mind that we are only filling a shoebox. Please help your child remember to bring any or all of these items to group for our last meeting on \_\_\_\_\_.

Please contact me with any questions. I appreciate your participation in the success of this project.

Thank you,

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
School Counselor \_\_\_\_\_

## SESSION 8:

# CELEBRATE

**Time needed:** 45 minutes

**Objectives:**

- Students will celebrate their time together in group.
- Students will put together their Honor Boxes.
- Students will celebrate and honor their family members.

**Materials:**

- Refreshments
- 1 piece of construction paper for each student (write their name in the middle ahead of time)
- Markers
- Packing tape
- Address labels
- Post-test

**Activity:**

- Have students write encouraging messages to each other on the individual pieces of construction paper. Have students pass the construction paper with their name on it to the right. Continue until everyone has had a chance to write on everyone's paper. This will be a reminder to the students that they have a group that supports their situation.
- Gather materials to put in Honor Boxes: journals, copies of worksheets the students want to send, thank you letter, puzzle letter, worrywart and items students bring from home.
- Compose a letter with the help of the whole group to include in each box. Ask students what they want the letter to say. Have all the students sign it. Make copies and include in the boxes.
- Serve refreshments, preferably something patriotic to go along with the theme. Talk to students about the group and how they are feeling about the group being over. Allow time for general processing of the group. Let students know that you will be bringing them together in about a month to check in with them.

**Evaluation:**

- Hand out the post-test and the small-group evaluation form. Ask students to turn both forms in before they leave small group.

**Homework:**

- Continue to be patriotic. Use what we have learned in group to cope better in your situation. Constantly provide support to each other.

## POST-GROUP FOLLOW-UP

**With students:** The school counselor should periodically check in with students to make sure they are doing okay and to make sure the students know the school counselor is available to talk. After two–three weeks, consider organizing a post-group “reunion” to make sure students still feel the group’s support. During this meeting, group members can process their progress since the group ended.

**With parents/teachers:** It is important to send a post-group follow-up letter to both parents and teachers. This letter should explain the general progress the school counselor noticed in group. It should also ask parents and teachers to continue to watch the behavior of the students. Many times, parents and teachers will be the first to know to refer students to the school counselor. Teachers should be made aware of the benefit of the small group in contributing to the students’ overall success. Individual letters, e-mails and/or phone calls should be made to parents and teachers to ensure the best service for the student.

# Group Evaluation Form

Did you feel like you were supported in this group?	Yes	No
Did you like the activities?	Yes	No
Were the topics helpful?	Yes	No

On a scale of 1-5, how did you like the group?  
1 = Disliked, 3=Neutral, 5=Loved

1	2	3	4	5
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What was your favorite activity?

What was your least favorite activity?

Additional comments:

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## Resources for Working with Students Experiencing Deployment

### Books

- Pavlicin, K.M. (2003). *Surviving deployment: A guide for military families*. St. Paul, MN: Elva Resa Publishers
- Robertson, R. (2005). *Deployment journal for kids*. St. Paul, MN: Elva Resa Publishing.
- Webb., N.B. *Mass trauma and violence: Helping families and children cope*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

### Monographs/Guides:

Department of Defense (n.d.). Educator's guide to the military child during deployment. Washington, D.C.: Author.

### Web sites:

[www.survivingdeployment.com](http://www.survivingdeployment.com)

[www.deploymentkids.com](http://www.deploymentkids.com)

[www.myarmylifetoo.com](http://www.myarmylifetoo.com)

[www.anysoldier.com](http://www.anysoldier.com)

[www.militarystudent.org](http://www.militarystudent.org)

[www.deploymentlink.osd.mil/](http://www.deploymentlink.osd.mil/)

[www.militaryresource.com/](http://www.militaryresource.com/)